

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

c/o Regine Miller, regine.CHIPS@gmail.com

530-277-3843

November 21, 2019

Barnie Gyant, Deputy Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592

Dear Barnie,

The ACCG would like to thank Region 5 Forest Service leadership for convening the October 21st meeting to discuss the MotorM2K project with the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG), the Dinkey Collaborative, Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions, and staff from the Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests. The ACCG's understanding from that meeting is that the Forest Service tasked each collaborative to identify focal areas with mixed treatments and balanced approaches that would dramatically increase treatment areas and be implemented faster than the average large landscape National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

In response to this request, the ACCG Administrative Work Group met on November 8 and November 12 to propose an internal process which was discussed at the November 20th ACCG general meeting. At that meeting, the ACCG committed to collaborate with the Calaveras Ranger District on the Stanislaus National Forest and the Amador Ranger District on the Eldorado National Forest to identify priority areas and approaches that represent the least controversial ways to increase pace and scale for the successful implementation of large treatments within the ACCG's boundaries. The ACCG further agreed to move forward as expediently as possible to fulfill this commitment.

The ACCG has identified two important immediate next steps.

First, to expedite project implementation, the ACCG is mid-process and intends to finalize an evaluative tool no later than February 2020. The tool's purpose is to create a roadmap for successful collaboration with the ACCG and to anticipate the level of potential controversy associated with a range of proposed treatments and project activities. Both the Calaveras and Amador Ranger Districts have been active participants in the development of this consensus-building tool. In the immediate term, this evaluation tool can help the Collaborative and the Forest Service jointly identify non-controversial treatments that would follow an expedited implementation process.

Second, the ACCG will be working to identify and map focal areas that can then be prioritized. The ACCG Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group (SLAWG) and Monitoring Work Group will jointly convene the first mapping workshop in December 2019 to begin this process. The Calaveras and Amador Ranger Districts have indicated that they will actively participate in the workshop. The workshop intends to bring ACCG stakeholders together to share information about completed projects, NEPA/CEQA ready projects, funded projects, and proposed projects within the ACCG

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

c/o Regine Miller, regine.CHIPS@gmail.com

530-277-3843

boundaries that work towards the ACCG's triple bottom line mission to create fire-safe communities, healthy forests and watersheds, and sustainable local economies.

An important desired outcome from the first workshop is to identify focal areas within the ACCG landscape, including on the Amador and Calaveras Ranger Districts, to guide the development of short and longer-term large projects that can be successfully implemented as quickly as possible. The ACCG is also currently pursuing Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding to develop a more robust landscape assessment mapping tool, in part, to assist the group prioritize treatments and project activities within the ACCG boundary.

The ACCG has also identified the below obstacles to increasing the pace and scale of large treatments. It will be important to anticipate and take into consideration these obstacles during project planning. The ACCG is considering ways to increase its capacity and to work with the Forest Service to address these and other possible constraints.

- Lack of forest products infrastructure
- Limited Forest Service and BLM staff capacity
- Limited funding
- Lack of adequate, current LIDAR and other condition data
- CEQA/NEPA bottleneck associated with limited staffing and resources
- Contracting challenges

One potential approach that the ACCG Administrative Work Group has discussed to help address obstacles and increase capacity is to leverage strengths and partnerships. For example, the ACCG is partnered with the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) who holds a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) with Stanislaus and Eldorado National Forests. The ACCG can leverage this MSA to help increase pace and scale.

The ACCG looks forward to working closely with the Stanislaus and Eldorado National Forests and the Region to increase the pace and scale of treatments on the Amador and Calaveras Ranger Districts to achieve greater resiliency on the landscape.

We thank you for your ongoing commitment to collaboration.

On Behalf of the ACCG,



Regine Miller
ACCG Administrator